

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT	1. The Removal of Abakumov as Minister of State Security 2. Ryumin and the Kremlin Doctors' Plot	DATE DISTR.	19 August 1954
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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
 THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
 (FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

1. In June 1951, the Ministry of State Security of the USSR was headed by Colonel General Viktor Semenovitch Abakumov, as Minister, with the following deputies: Lieutenant General Sergey Ivanovich Ogoltsov; Colonel General /Sergey Arseniyevich/ Goglidze; Major General /Yevgeniy Petrovich/ Pitovranov; Lieutenant General Selivanovskiy (fnu), in charge of counterintelligence; Lieutenant General Sergey Romanovich Savchenko; Lieutenant General /Afanasiy Sergeyevich/ Blinov, in charge of services and supply; Lieutenant General Stakhanov (fnu), for the Militsiya; and Colonel General /Arkadiy Nikolayevich/ Apolonov, for MGB Troops. 25X1
2. Abakumov had become Minister in 1946, thanks, as far as source knows, to the personal action of Stalin. As the Chief of the Counterintelligence Directorate (Smersh) during the war, he had acquired great prestige and authority, which he kept to the very end. He became all-powerful and paid no attention to the opinions of many officials of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. He assumed a superior attitude with regard to all the other ministers, which led them to complain about and criticize Abakumov. All this contributed to a desire on the part of certain Central Committee leaders to get rid of Abakumov. Beriya, too, played an important role in influencing the decision to replace Abakumov. 25X1
3. Prior to June 1951, [redacted] Abakumov had become a frequent visitor to the Central Committee of the Party. On one occasion he was called there four times during the course of a single day. This activity was interpreted by the rank and file of the MGB as an indication either of a change in the operational policy of the MGB, or of difficulties of Abakumov himself. 25X1

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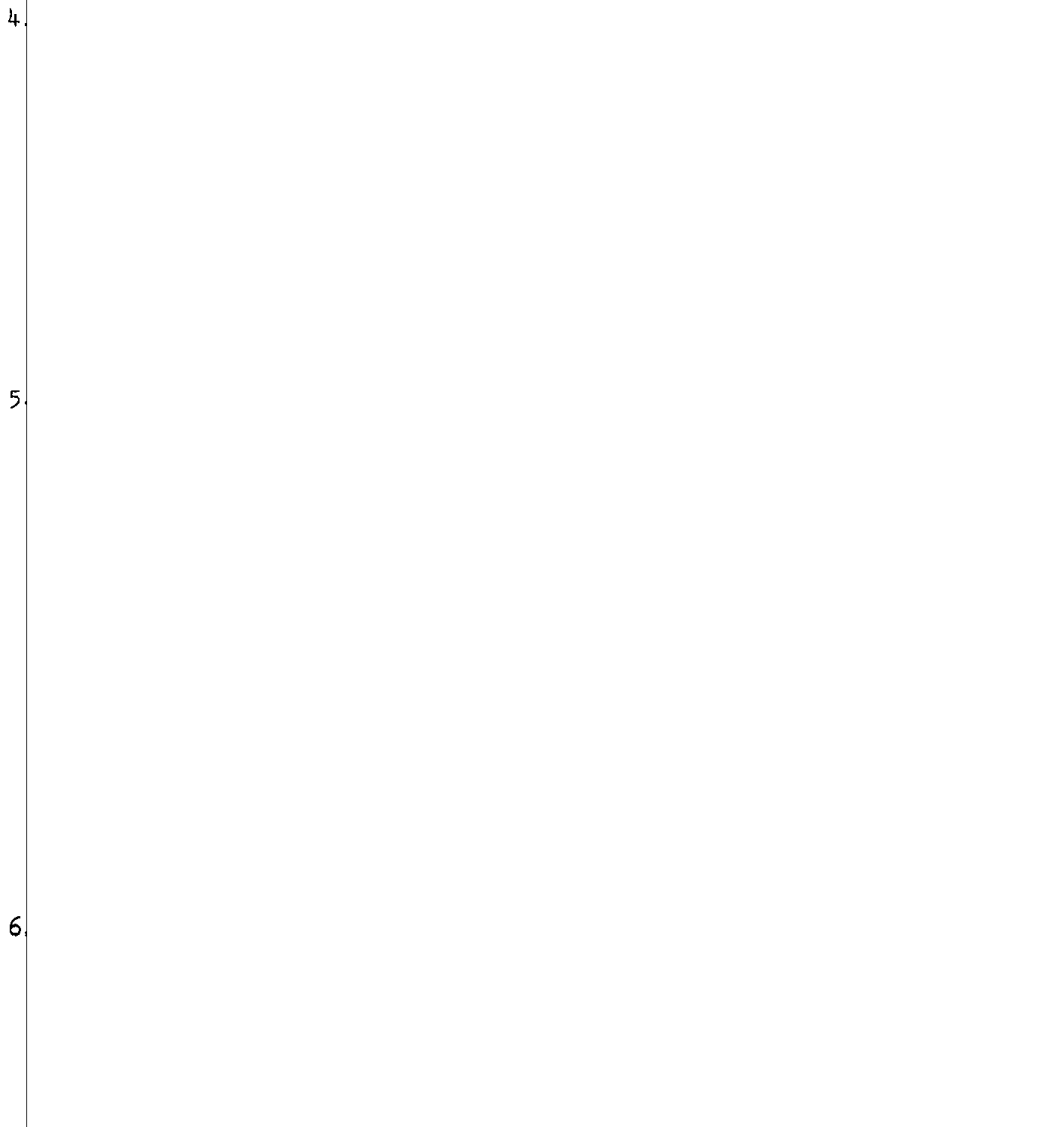
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7. Stalin then appointed a commission consisting of Malenkov, Bulganin, Beriya, and Ignatyev to check on the work of the Investigating Unit for Especially Important Affairs in particular, and of the MGB in general. After the conclusion of the investigation, there was published a decision of the Central Committee of the Party concerning the disorganized work of the agencies of the MGB and the loss of vigilance on the part of the top echelon of the MGB.
8. In June or July 1951, an order signed by Stalin was made known to members of the MGB, announcing the appointment of Lieutenant General Ogoltsov as Acting Minister, MGB. No mention was made of Abakumov in the order, and it was assumed that Abakumov either had been removed from his post for cause or had received a special assignment.
9. At about the same time (summer 1951), a wave of arrests swept through the upper echelons of the Ministry of State Security and also through the Investigating Unit for Especially Important Affairs. Abakumov, Selivanovskiy, and the Chief of the Investigating Unit for Especially Important Affairs, Major General Leonov (fnu), his Deputy, Colonel Kamerov (fnu), and Pitovranov were

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-3-

put in prison. Deputy Minister for Services and Supply, Lieutenant General Blinov, was discharged. Deputy Minister for MGB Troops, Apolonov, was also discharged.

10. At the end of August or the beginning of September, the Management Section of the Central Committee appointed Ignatyev, who was a member of the Commission investigating the MGB, as Minister of the MGB. In addition to Ogoltsov, who remained as First Deputy Minister, the other deputy ministers were Colonel General Goglidze, Lieutenant General Savchenko, Lieutenant General Ryasnoy, Lieutenant General Obruchnikov (fnu), Lieutenant General Stakhanov (fnu) for the Militiia, and Army General /Ivan Ivanovich/ Maslennikov. Deputy for MGB Troops. Ryumin

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became a deputy minister, a member of the MGB kollegiya, and also Chief of the Investigating Unit for Especially Important Affairs. The Deputy Chief of Administration (Zamestitel Upravlyayushchego Delami) of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, whose name was unknown to source, was appointed Deputy Minister for Administration of the MGB.

11. At the same time, a considerable number of Party functionaries from various Party organs, particularly from the Central Committee and the Moscow city and rayon Party organizations, were assigned to duty with the MGB. Some of these were appointed to leading positions and others as ordinary employees. It usually worked out that the chief of a section was an experienced MGB man and his deputy a Party worker. This was the case in the operational directorates and particularly in the Investigating Unit for Especially Important Affairs, as well as in the Fifth Directorate and the Personnel Directorate. This arrangement continued through Ignatyev's tenure as Minister and until the appointment of Beriya as Minister of the merged MVD/MGB.

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12. Some of the persons arrested with Abakumov were later released and no longer considered to be under suspicion. Thus, Pitovranov was released in November or December 1952. This action was the result of Malenkov's intercession with Stalin, who agreed that a mistake had been made with respect to Pitovranov and that he was not an enemy of the people. Selivanovskiy was also released and appointed chief of the military counterintelligence directorate in one of the military districts (okrug).

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13. The actual arrests of the Kremlin doctors were not made until fall 1952, over a year after the case against them had been initiated and several weeks prior to the official announcement.

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14. The doctors were incarcerated in either the MGB Internal Prison or the Butyrskiy Prison, since all persons whose cases were handled by the Investigating Unit for Especially Important Affairs were put in one of these two prisons. Source believes that the doctors remained there through their period of imprisonment.
15. The reversal of the official opinion with regard to the doctors' guilt actually took place shortly after their imprisonment, and before Stalin's death. It was then that, while no official action on the doctors was yet taken, Ryumin was relieved of his MGB posts and transferred to a job as chief of a section in the Ministry of State Control. While Ryumin was used as a tool in the furtherance of the Soviet policy of anti-Semitism, it would be correct to consider him as a moving spirit

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-4-

in the actual preparation and the carrying through of the doctors' case.

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16. When Beriya became minister, Pravda published a denunciatory article reviewing the Kremlin doctors' plot and stating that the conclusion had been reached that the former heads of the MGB had not acted correctly in arresting the doctors.

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17. The doctors were freed. Beriya and his Deputy Minister, [Bogdan Zakharovich] Kobulov, called on each doctor separately, saying that an evil joke had been played on them, that Beriya had uncovered and smashed the plot, that the doctors were honest men, and that they had been freed on the order of Beriya. Kobulov particularly emphasized to the doctors that they must always be grateful to Beriya because he had uncovered the injustice toward the doctors and had freed them. It is true that not all the doctors were freed, because one or two had died while in prison.
18. After the arrest of Beriya and his proteges, Ogoltsov was released from prison in September 1953 and Ignatyev was restored to membership in the Central Committee and appointed as Secretary of the Bashkir Party Committee. Ryumin was released from prison at the end of August or in early September. As early as July, it had been recommended that this be done. Source heard that he and his wife were both seen in Tushino in September 1953.

19. Source believes that Ryumin's subsequent arrest and execution do not necessarily mean that he was tried twice for the same crime. He may have been arrested and held in prison in the first instance without the formality of any trial at all. This happened time and time again, and was not considered unusual. Or he may have been tried two or any number of times for the same crime. This again is not necessarily unusual. However, source feels that the first variant is the more likely.

20. [] the reason for Ryumin's execution is that the Kremlin is hoping to attract not only the Jewish doctors (70 percent of the doctors in the Soviet Union are Jewish, according to source) but the Jewish population in general to the side of the Government. The Soviets wish to show to the Jewish people that the Government does not want dissension between the Jews and the Great Russians and that the Government will not march against the Jews. [] not only that the Ryumin execution will not close the matter, but that, in all probability, "a new wave of purges will roll over the MVD".

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21. When Ryumin was sentenced the first time, there was talk that Abakumov would be freed, since he had been imprisoned on Ryumin's evidence. Now that Ryumin has been executed, there is a possibility that Abakumov will be released. Abakumov, however, is charged with other crimes, although they are of less import.

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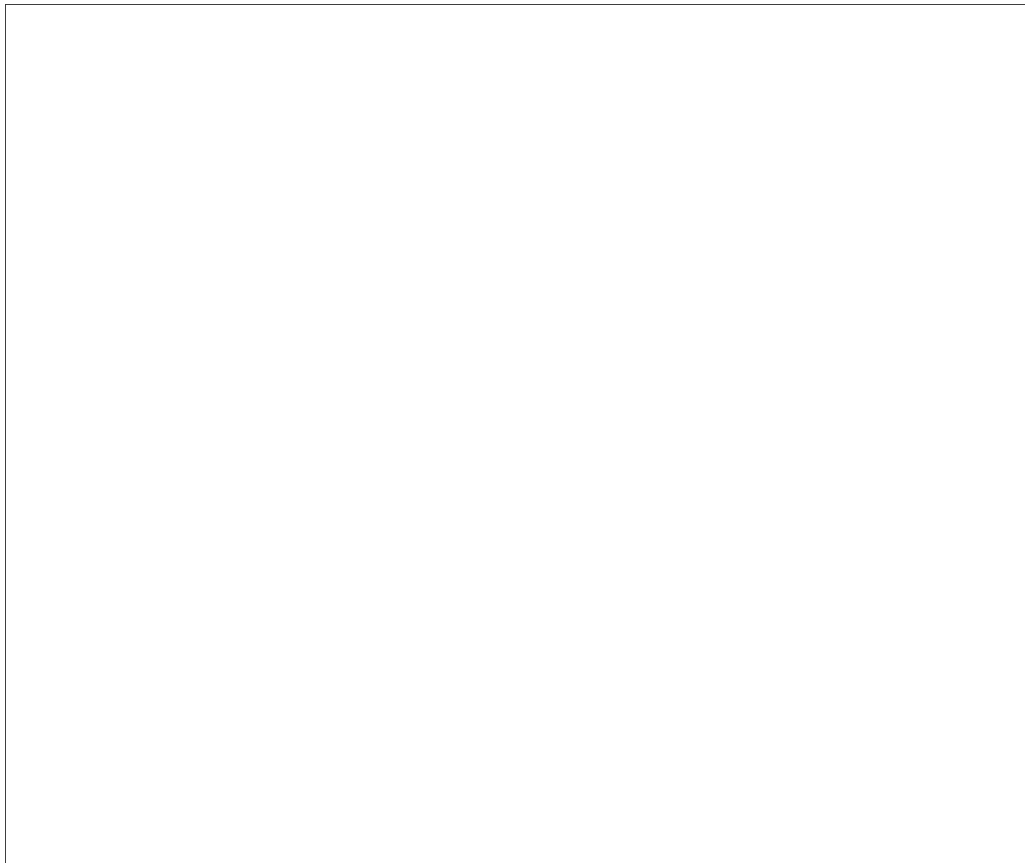
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22. If the less important crimes are cast aside, there is a good chance that Abakumov will be released. However, the Soviets have only two alternatives. They may either free Abakumov and give him a post of very high responsibility in order completely to exonerate him, or they may let him sit in prison until he dies. There is no other possibility.

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1. Ryumin's initials have been given in the press as M.D.



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